

4.

Winfried Lechner - Seminar für Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Tübingen *Bivalent Coordination in German*

In this squib, I present two paradoxa from bivalent coordination in German. I have to delegate possible solutions to further research.

Paradox I

In German, coordinate structures joined by the bivalent coordinator *entweder-oder* 'either-or' permit CP-coordination:

- (1) [_{CP} Entweder hat Hans gesungen] oder [_{CP} Peter hat getanzt]
either has H. sung or P. has danced
"Either John sang or Peter danced"

Both conjuncts in (1) are verb second clauses. It follows that *entweder* is located in SpecCP of the first conjunct. At the same time, *entweder* is part of the complex disjunction operator, and should therefore be parsed in a position that c-commands the CP (e.g. as head of a BooleanP, which in turn takes the CP as a complement; Munn 1993). These two conflicting requirements lead to a first phrase structure paradox.

Constructions involving *weder-noch* generalize the observation made above to both conjuncts. In verb second clauses joined by *weder-noch*/'neither-nor', *weder* as well as *noch* have to remain inside their respective clauses. (2) contrasts with (3), where *noch* is located external to the second CP:

- (2) [_{CP} Weder hat Peter das Theorem verstanden] [_{CP} noch konnte Maria dem
neither has P. the theorem understood nor could M. the
Beweis folgen]
proof follow
"Neither has Peter understood the theorem, nor could Mary follow the proof"
- (3) * [_{CP} Weder hat Peter das Theorem verstanden] noch [_{CP} **Maria konnte** dem
neither has P. the theoreme understood nor M. could the
Beweis folgen]
proof follow

Paradox II

The second paradox arises from the interpretive properties of the *weder-noch* construction, and consists in the observation that there is contradictory evidence as to the scope domain of the negative operator which is encoded in *weder*. Note to begin with that *weder* can be ‘immersed’ in the first conjunct, such that it comes to lie to the right of the subject:

- (4) [_{CP} Peter hat **weder** das Theorem verstanden] [_{CP} noch konnte Maria dem
P. has neither the theorem understood nor could M. the
Beweis folgen]
proof follow
“Neither has Peter understood the theorem, nor could Mary follow the proof”

Now, low *weder* does not license NPIs to its left (see (6)), indicating that the scope of negation is limited to the surface position of *weder*:

- (5) [_{CP} **Weder** hat **auch nur einer** das Theorem verstanden]
neither has even one (person) the theorem understood
[_{CP} noch konnte jemand dem Beweis folgen]
nor could somebody the proof follow
“Neither has even a single person understood the theorem,
nor could somebody follow the proof”

- (6) * [_{CP} **Auch nur einer** hat **weder** das Theorem verstanden]
even one (person) has neither the theorem understood
[_{CP} noch konnte jemand dem Beweis folgen]
nor could somebody the proof follow

At the same time, however, the negative portion of *neither* has to take scope over the whole disjunction, in order to ensure that *weder A noch B* is assigned the correct interpretation given in (7a):

- (7) a. $\neg[A \vee B]$
b. $[\neg A] \vee [\neg B]$

The alternative representations according to which negation takes narrow scope w.r.t. both disjuncts, as in (7b), yields the wrong truth conditions (assuming that the meaning of *noch* is ‘not or’).

References

Munn, A.B. (1993) Topics in the Syntax and Semantics of Coordinate Structures, University of Maryland.